



COPS in Action

Community Oriented Policing Services

www.usdoj.gov/cops/

Boston, Massachusetts



"It began with the obvious admission that the police cannot control crime by ourselves. We have enlisted the aid of our partners in crime-fighting, and the jury is in. Collaboration works."

**Police Commissioner Paul F. Evans
Boston Police Department**

Boston is consistently cited as an example of the tremendous impact of community policing. Proactive policing and partnerships with community groups have become the norm. The department forged working relationships with Mayor Thomas Menino; local probation officers, parole officers and prosecutors; local, state and federal agencies; and each of Boston's neighborhoods. To assist in the Boston Police Department's (BPD) efforts, the COPS Office has awarded over \$13 million in grants to hire or redeploy 139 officers.

In the early 1990's, Boston was faced with a surge in homicides, gang-related crime, and youth violence. Gangs were prevalent and accounted for much of Boston's violence. The police department responded by creating the Youth Violence Strike Force to tackle the problem head on, by implementing an aggressive intervention strategy and working with the community and gang involved youth. In addition, Boston began Operation Cease Fire, to target and control gang-related violence and firearms trafficking throughout the area. These efforts were bolstered by a \$750,000 COPS Anti-Gang Initiative grant.

The BPD's comprehensive approach has resulted in a sharp decrease in gang-related violence. Boston has partnered with area government agencies, allowing for fast-track prosecution and incarceration, stronger undercover narcotics operations, and better tracking of gangs, guns, and violence. Probation compliance among juveniles is up, due to an innovative ride-along program for probation officers to ensure that their probationers are not out on the streets.

The BPD has been awarded nearly \$500,000 in COPS grants to combat domestic violence. With those funds, the department created Peace — a program that partners the police with Massachusetts Coalition of Battered Women's Service Groups, the District Attorney's office, the Public Health Commission, and several other community-based service providers. The project

ensures that a coordinated response is available for victims who do not seek help immediately. This proactive approach brings together everyone involved, from the front line to city agencies, to link available services with victims of potential repeat offenders.

The efforts of the Boston Police Department, in partnership with the community, have produced their lowest violent crime rate since 1971. Property crime dropped to its lowest level in over three decades, with a 49 percent decrease since 1990. House break-ins and car thefts have also hit a 35 year low. Boston's implementation of community policing strategies, with assistance from the COPS Office, has led to sharp reduction in youth violence crime rates. Every year since 1993, the number of juveniles killed by guns has decreased, with a drop of 60 percent from 1990 to 1998. The city experienced an unprecedented 29 month period (July 1995-December 1997) in which not one juvenile was killed with a firearm. The rate of homicide for those under 24 has dropped 58 percent since 1995. Overall, the rate for violent crime involving a firearm decreased 43 percent since 1995. And citizens are definitely noticing these trends. The 1997 Boston Public Safety Survey found that 76 percent of residents feel somewhat to very safe out alone in their neighborhoods at night — up from 58 percent in 1995.

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